

SENATE RECORD VOTE ANALYSIS

105th Congress
2nd Session

Vote No. 77

April 2, 1998, 7:40 pm
Page S-3080 Temp. Record

BUDGET RESOLUTION/Saving Social Security

SUBJECT: Senate Concurrent Budget Resolution for fiscal years 1999-2003 . . . S.Con. Res. 86. Grams amendment No. 2222.

ACTION: AMENDMENT AGREED TO, 50-48

SYNOPSIS: As reported, S.Con. Res. 86, the Senate Concurrent Budget Resolution for fiscal years 1999-2003, will balance the unified budget in 1998 and will run surpluses for each of the next 5 fiscal years. Both Federal spending and Federal revenues will increase 3.5 percent from fiscal year (FY) 1998 to FY 1999. All surpluses will be reserved for Social Security reform. A reserve fund will be established to allow the entire Federal share of revenues resulting from a potential tobacco settlement to be dedicated to bolstering Medicare's solvency.

The Grams amendment would express the sense of the Senate that the functional totals in the resolution reflect the assumption that, "Congress and the President should use any budget surplus to reduce the Social Security payroll tax and to establish personal retirement accounts with the tax reduction for hard-working Americans," and that "Congress and the President should not use the Social Security surplus to finance general government programs and other spending, should begin to build real assets for the trust funds, and should work to reform the Social Security system."

NOTE: The amendment was called up after all debate time had expired. However, by unanimous consent, 2 minutes of debate were permitted.

Those favoring the amendment contended:

The latest report from the Treasury Department shows that we may have a budget surplus as large as \$60 billion to \$80 billion this year. As we have argued repeatedly, this surplus comes directly from taxes paid by hard-working Americans, and it is only fair to return it to them by using it to protect Social Security or to give tax relief. Social Security can be protected by paying down the debt, or, more significantly, by enacting reforms such as by creating Social Security IRAs to build up significant real savings. The

(See other side)

YEAS (50)			NAYS (48)			NOT VOTING (2)	
Republicans (49 or 91%)	Democrats (1 or 2%)		Republicans (5 or 9%)	Democrats (43 or 98%)		Republicans (1)	Democrats (1)
Abraham	Hutchison	Cleland	Bond	Akaka	Kennedy	Helms- ^{2AY}	Inouye- ²
Allard	Inhofe		Chafee	Baucus	Kerrey		
Ashcroft	Kempthorne		Collins	Biden	Kerry		
Bennett	Kyl		Jeffords	Bingaman	Kohl		
Brownback	Lott		Snowe	Boxer	Landrieu		
Burns	Lugar			Breaux	Lautenberg		
Campbell	Mack			Bryan	Leahy		
Coats	McCain			Bumpers	Levin		
Cochran	McConnell			Byrd	Lieberman		
Coverdell	Murkowski			Conrad	Mikulski		
Craig	Nickles			Daschle	Moseley-Braun		
D'Amato	Roberts			Dodd	Moynihan		
DeWine	Roth			Dorgan	Murray		
Domenici	Santorum			Durbin	Reed		
Enzi	Sessions			Feingold	Reid		
Faircloth	Shelby			Feinstein	Robb		
Frist	Smith, Bob			Ford	Rockefeller		
Gorton	Smith, Gordon			Glenn	Sarbanes		
Gramm	Specter			Graham	Torricelli		
Grams	Stevens			Harkin	Wellstone		
Grassley	Thomas			Hollings	Wyden		
Gregg	Thompson			Johnson			
Hagel	Thurmond						
Hatch	Warner						
Hutchinson							

EXPLANATION OF ABSENCE:

- 1—Official Business
- 2—Necessarily Absent
- 3—Illness
- 4—Other

SYMBOLS:

- AY—Announced Yea
- AN—Announced Nay
- PY—Paired Yea
- PN—Paired Nay

Roth amendment that was agreed to earlier put the Senate on record as favoring using the surpluses for Social Security IRAs. The Grams amendment would advance that proposal, by suggesting using part of the current payroll taxes for that purpose. This proposal has great merit. We urge our colleagues to vote for its adoption.

Those opposing the amendment contended:

This proposal is a bit reckless. We are interested in the idea of Social Security IRAs, but we are also very concerned that such IRAs may put senior citizens' retirements at the mercy of the vagaries of the free market. The Grams amendment would put the Senate on record prematurely. The issue should be studied more carefully before it is endorsed. For that reason, we urge the rejection of this amendment.